

## **Vélocity as Autono-mobility: prefigurative dimensions of cycling imaginaries**

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At the end of the nineteenth century, the autonomous mobility provided by bicycles and tricycles created for a mobile imaginary that paved the way for automobility. Through the course of the twentieth century, growth and decline of cycling mobilities was inseparably entangled with the rise of a range of motor-mobilities (two and four wheeled). Yet cycling persists and has recently been championed widely as a contender for future mobility post-growth societies. However, the hegemonic position reached by automobility as a dominant system has led to closure of the political imagination. Explorations of cycle-friendly infrastructures and practices remain necessarily framed by and shaped within the dominance of automobility. Even progressive imaginations of cycle-friendly futures are often locked into a future imaginary under the shadow of automobility. To break this deadlock requires, as Levitas (2013) argues, utopia as a method. This requires engagement with the world of daydreams, of imagination, of worlds of affect as well as the technological and spatial arrangement that enable autono-mobility

Against this background, this paper explores the products and practices of generations of “unrealistic” innovators, ideas that may appear and lie dormant or be dismissed, but which still may spring up in the less-disciplined interstices of hegemonic regimes. It questions some of the unconsidered truisms of design and practice in cycle-related mobilities and considers the value of different aspects of cycling practices for post-growth societies. Imagining a future beyond the car it considers examples of both historical and contemporary cycle-related technologies and cycling practices that may serve as provocations to break from the overly pragmatic realism of much of today’s cycle advocacy.

While the paper focuses on prefigurative imaginaries, the metaphoric image of transformation adopted is less linear than the metaphor of seeds and their growth. Instead, these transformative ideas, practices and experiences are considered as bubbles, constantly emerging and dissipating, but through their ephemeral existence transforming the nature of their substance around them.

The preferred format for this contribution combines a formal academic paper with an image based powerpoint presentation with embedded video material.

## **Commoning mobility: a dialogue**

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In the debate on the futures of mobility and low carbon transitions a few points are becoming increasingly clear. First, we cannot isolate mobility from other dimensions of society: visions of future mobility reflect how our lives will be arranged, how our daily practices will look like, what our values are and will be. Second, and relatedly, some solutions to the question of low carbon mobility transitions may lie beyond the field of technology and even the field of transportation as such (e.g. slower lifestyles, teleworking, densification). Thirdly, questions of governance and pertaining issues of inclusivity, justice, (digital) rights and participation are fundamental for imagining and realising fairer and greener futures. And, finally, transformative change is likely to emerge through new alliances and dialogues between different groups in society – policy-makers, academics, activists, companies etc. Our paper, written by an official from the municipality of Amsterdam and a researcher from the University of Amsterdam, is an attempt at such a dialogue.

Building our conversation around the above points we examine the present ambitions and struggles of the city of Amsterdam in planning for future mobility. We use a notion of “commoning mobility” as a starting point for the conversation: Can we reconsider mobility beyond the idea of individual freedom and think of it as a common? Why may we want to do that? What forms may it take? What is the role of the city in these processes? As we discuss these questions, we revisit a number of academic debates on growth, scarcity, sharing and experimentation. The paper does not provide answers or recipes, rather does it present an attempt to think together about the meaning of mobility and its futures of one specific city, and to develop new questions that connect the academic debate and the current challenges of urban planning.

## **Electric Auto(no)-mobility: Transforming the German transport sector to become climate neutral by 2035**

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Climate change, air pollution, land consumption – the negative side-effects of our car-centered transport system are manifold. To get Germany on a 1,5°C compatible climate protection pathway, its transport sector must be decarbonized by 2035. Greenpeace has developed a transport vision on how to achieve just that and is fighting to see it become reality. The presentation will sketch out the key characteristics of the transport vision and report on the reactions Greenpeace is getting for its transport work.

## **Autonomising Mobile Experience: Rights to Desired Mobilities Beyond the Cars**

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This paper seeks to ponder on the 'rights' issue of mobilities to rethink how prevailing conceptions have failed to encompass the very basic justice issue of desirable mobile experience. Mobilities have largely been determined by endless political and technological decisions claiming to move towards a future of sustainable forms of transport. However, a very elementary element has been missed in the discussion – that is the rights to appropriating journeys.

I first seek to problematize how 'rights to mobilities' have been an inadequately defined concept in the positioning of contests in the politics of mobilities. I propose that the association of movement to political freedom only addresses the most superficial layer of mobilities, as the 'how' question which entails the forms of movement and the subsequent mobile experience are essentially ruled out. On the other hand, I shall argue that the version of 'rights to the city' proposed by Lefebvre (1991, 1996) lacks an explicit association to a mobile perspective for the sole focus on 'appropriation' of static urban space. Hence it is important that the notion of 'rights to the city' is extended towards capturing the mobile aspect, in the meaning-making of the choice of mobile journeys, going beyond the legal and political aspect of 'rights to mobilities' as proposed by Cresswell (2006, 2010).

After the theoretical interrogation, I shall move towards the more practical dimension, and argue against the over-emphasis on non-automated forms of mobility in both the academic and policy context. As Cass and Manderscheid (2019) would suggest, there is a right to move and not to move. Yet the uncritical acceptance and celebration of academics has led to excessive attention being paid towards walking and cycling, which has disregarded the very importance of public transport in effectively moving towards a carless society without compromising on the experience. The radical advocacy of walking and cycling also does not stand the challenge and counter-forces of rights to be immobile while being on the move, disability, and even in adverse weather without an interiorized compartment. In effect a compatible transport experience is the key to appeal to most. Yet, it is continuously evident that metropolises have been undergoing inappropriate cuts towards bus services. 'Rights to desired mobilities' are non-existent when users are forced to use the other modes including the rail, the bike and walking, being superficially labelled and considered as more efficient and 'sustainable' than that of the bus. Such shifts are not only disrespectful to the 'rights', but counterproductive towards a sustainably mobile future.

Hence, I propose the ignored possibility upgrading of public transport is a much needed, simple, and easy solution towards a post-car future. Towards the end, I propose to fully utilize the notion of 'rights' and shift the emphasis towards 'rights to desire mobilities' beyond that of the car and the legal dimension. The 'rights to the city' concept must embody a mobile dimension beyond appropriation to merely static space. The experience should be placed at the forefront in realizing the 'autonomy' dimension of automobilities beyond cars.

## **Revaluing mobility based on intrinsic, human and qualitative values: a sustainable and desirable alternative to speed and economic efficiency?**

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A core theme of degrowth scholarship is to rethink our valuation of space, time and resources. A key element that concerns all of these is mobility. How can we rethink the valuation of mobility itself – beyond its indispensable function in facilitating our forms of valuation of other elements of space, time and resources? One important way is through immotility. Another might be found in a different (partly revitalised) intrinsic, human and qualitative approach to the value of mobility.

Currently, most individuals in the 'Global North' (and in some places in the 'Global South') are inclined to choose certain modes and speeds primarily considering quantitative and economic criteria (e.g. speed of travel, minimisation of financial and temporal costs of travel). This often leads to high use of air- and private automobile mobility. This is not always due to egocentrism (e.g. not caring for the environmental costs or wanting to save money for pure capital accumulation), but also aligned with necessities in an (economic) system that requires such choices for survival and for the advancement of many more qualitatively inspired goals (e.g. necessary mobility to reach a good job; desirability for exchange with far-away countries within a context in which this is only feasible through short and cheap trips).

Degrowth thinking and planning might provide the crucial change in valuation of time, space and resources necessary for reaching a change in mobility valuation. This requires an enquiry into why we choose which ways to travel, how this relates to our wider conceptions of value, and how a change in that reasoning can affect our choice for more environmentally and socially sustainable forms of mobility (where socially sustainable refers to both social justice and human energy and inspiration). Job- and resource accessibility will remain crucial and dependent on at least minimal levels of mobility, which remain subject to existing dilemmas for social equity and general sustainability. However, mobility could be valued differently in at least two crucial ways: 1) its intrinsic value and 2) its human, qualitative value.

The intrinsic value has been debated before in relation to the experience of driving, cycling or walking, or the value created through mobility's contribution to mental and physical health, among other topics. These could be brought back to a more central position, while seeing these intrinsic values in relation to questions of environmental sustainability. This approach relates strongly to seeking resonance in mobility itself – which expressly does not mean seeking to always have more mobility.

The human and qualitative value of mobility means, for example, valuing the cultural exchanges possible through and during mobility, the educational value of travel and contact with different places and cultures, and the time required for these values to manifest. If an economy is not based on constant economic growth, it should also be more capable to accommodate such values – without creating an increase in unsustainable modes of travel. Rather, at times, creating a higher valuation of slower or more intensive forms of travel.

## **Non-commercial carsharing: A local and direct organization of sustainable mobility**

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In my contribution I take a starting point in a relational understanding of the capitalist mode of production in which mobilities of land, labor, data, money and ideas serve as the ‘lubricants’ of the capitalist accumulation process and its accompanying processes of capitalist socialization. Vice versa, immobilities and the uneven distribution of mobilities, following theories of uneven development, are an outcome but also a necessary condition for continued capitalist development and its mobilities. Seeing this through the lens of the second contradiction of capitalism – capitalist development impairs its own conditions of social and ecological reproduction – I argue that there is a theoretical and practical need to rethink society’s relationship to mobilities beyond capitalism’s growth and competition logic in a way that enables an emancipatory and socio-ecological transformation. As an example for redefining this relationship I want to present non-commercial forms of sharing mobilities, especially non-commercial carsharing. My understanding of non-commercial sharing is the purchase and/or usage of an asset of mobility (e.g. car, bike, cargo-bikes) through an institutionalized process within a defined (local) group, e.g. a group of friends, neighbours, the extended family, an association or a NGO. By institutionalized process I refer to any form of arrangement between the participants that results in a ‘regulatory’ frame leading to regularization and habitualization of their practice. I focus my attention on the motivations of people to participate in such a form of sharing and further investigate the influences this participation has on them. The research explores the possibilities of non-commercial mobilities sharing as an anchor for communal life, however the emotional attachment to the car frequently persists in non-personal ownership – the car can be perceived as communally owned or as a group member. This can provide a source for identification and engagement and takes a step in clearing up the fetishism surrounding the car obscuring its social character. Entering a non-commercial carsharing arrangement often is preceded by a critique on the individualized car-based mobility system and its ecological impacts, yet the practice of non-commercial sharing not only enhanced and expanded this critique, but in some cases also planted the seed for a critique. Overall non-commercial carsharing practices are perceived and described – sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously – as a way to deal with social and ecological problems derived from a car-based mobility system, e.g. individualisation and environmental destruction. I therefore conceptualize non-commercial forms of carsharing as spaces for everyday resistance against a capitalist system of mobilities. They bear the potential of self-determined, communal and ecologically-minded mobility beyond individual car-ownership invoking the idea of a mobilities commons and might provide a non-growth-based form of local, small-scale and direct organisation of mobility on a neighbourhood level.